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October 30, 2006

PRESS RELEASE

—For Immediate Release—

Chief Justice Leigh Saufley of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, has named Beth Stickney and Meryl Troop as co-recipients of the Judicial Branch Volunteer of the Year Award. The recipients were recognized for their outstanding efforts to assist the court system in its work to improve access to the courts for those with Limited English Proficiency.

Beth Stickney is the Executive Director of the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project. In that role, she has become very familiar with the difficulties that immigrant members of the community can have in dealing with the legal system because of language barriers. She has worked tirelessly with the Limited English Proficiency Task Force to establish procedures and policies, and to develop training materials, to assist Judges and Clerks in working with those persons who are limited in their ability to communicate effectively using the English language. Ms. Stickney chaired the Committee that published a report, in January of 2005, which contains numerous recommendations for improvements in meeting the needs of non-English speaking persons. Since then she has been an active member of the committee that is implementing those recommendations.

Meryl Troop is the Director of the Office of Deaf Services and Multi-Cultural Diversity for the Department of Health and Human Services. As an American Sign Language Interpreter, she has spent many hours in the State's Courthouses and is familiar with court procedures and the issues that affect members of the deaf and hard of hearing community. Ms. Troop is also a member of the Task Force on Limited English Proficiency, which is currently developing recommendations to the State's Supreme Judicial Court.

In making the presentations Chief Justice Saufley noted that, "Ms. Stickney and Ms. Troop have served as experts and advocates who have been extraordinary in their willingness to spend many hours creating draft documents and procedures to assist Judges, Clerks, and other Court Staff, in addressing the goal of access to the courts. Their efforts have been invaluable to the improvements that are being made.

The Outstanding Volunteer of the Year is awarded to that person or program who, in a voluntary capacity, assists the Judicial Branch in fulfilling its mission of administering justice by providing an accessible, efficient, and impartial system of dispute resolution. Beth Stickney and Meryl Troop have met that criteria making a substantial contribution of their time and expertise to the benefit of all of those seeking access to Maine's Court System. The Judicial branch is indebted to these two dedicated individuals for their hard work in this most important area.